

Dr. BARTON'S
S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE the

HOUSE of COMMONS,

A T

St. Margaret's, Westminster,

On Friday the 12th of March, 1762.

Lunæ, 15^o die Martii, 1762.

ORDERED,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Doctor BARTON, for the Sermon by him preached upon *Friday* last before this House, at *St. Margaret's Westminster*, and that he be desired to print the same; and that Mr. *Cocks*, and Sir *Roger Newdigate*, do acquaint him therewith.

J. DYSON, Cl. Dom. Com.

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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE the

H O U S E of C O M M O N S,

A T

St. Margaret's Westminster,

U P O N

F R I D A Y, the 12th of M A R C H, 1762.

B E I N G

The Day appointed for a G E N E R A L F A S T.

By H E N R Y B A R T O N, D. D. *K*

Warden of M E R T O N College, O X F O R D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. S A N D B Y, in Fleetstreet.

M D C C L X I I.

S E R M O N

Preached by the Rev. Mr. [illegible]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON [illegible]

The Day appointed for a General Fast

By HENRY BARTON D.D.

Warden of Allerton College, Oxford.

L O N D O N

Printed for W. & A. [illegible]

MDCCLXII

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE the
HOUSE of COMMONS,

A T
St. Margaret's, Westminster,

On Friday the 12th of March 1762.

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I S A I A H V. 3, 4.

*And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge,
I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not
done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring
forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

GRATITUDE is a species of Justice, which requireth that suitable returns be made for benefits received. Benefits received from equals among men may be recompensed by equal benefits. Such as are received from superiors can oftentimes be no otherwise recompensed than by our best endeavours to requite them. A present readiness, in doing what we are able, manifests a good disposition to do more, and to discharge the whole of our obligation. He that doeth all he can, though he doeth not all he would, to this purpose, satisfieth thereby all reasonable demands on his gratitude.

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And

And this virtue is esteemed so congenial to the nature of man, and is found so eminently serviceable to civil life, that it is regarded as a principal cement of society; binding and uniting the parts and members of a Community to each other by reciprocal offices of kindness, for the comfort of individuals, and the welfare of all.

But how considerable soever the benefits, which men are enabled to confer, may seem, yet the benefits, which man continually receives from the bounty of his Maker, are infinitely more and greater: man's obligations therefore are proportionable; and so, the sin of ingratitude to God is exceeding sinful. But can a man be profitable to God, as he can to a friend, his fellow-creature, labouring under like wants and infirmities with himself? can man requite God's mercies? he cannot recount them. What then shall we render unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto us? what God hath thought fit to require, and hath promised to accept, obedience to his will, as far as it is made known to us. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* (Micah vi. 8.) This is the return which reason prescribes, gratitude dictates, the divine justice demands, and, if we are not wanting to ourselves, the divine grace will enable us to make.

And yet the Jews, that nation most highly favoured by God, were most heinously guilty of the violation of his laws, insomuch that the Prophet is commissioned to denounce the severity of God's wrath against them. Mercy however alloweth space for repentance, the threaten'd punishment is awhile suspended, the majesty of heaven condescends to reason with sinful man, and to represent, by a familiar Allegory, the criminal insensibility, the unnatural ingratitude, wherewith the choicest blessings, the most distinguishing marks of the divine bounty had been received. *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, &c.*

Permit me to consider these words as applicable to all persons and nations, and including these following Propositions,

I. That the general course of God's providence, in the government of the world, is the gracious effect of his benevolence to mankind—*What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?*

II. That

II. That God's providential goodness to man is not suitably requited—*Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

III. That, in this respect, man is capable of discerning, and therefore is obliged to acknowledge, the benevolence and equity of God's dealings, as also the absurdity and iniquity of his own conduct—*And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.*

I shall attempt to illustrate these propositions briefly, in their order. And

I. The general course of God's providence, in the government of the world, is the gracious effect of his benevolence to mankind.

Among other similitudes with which the Scriptures abound in condescension to human infirmity, we find God is resembled to Light, a being, among created beings, of eminent purity, splendor and activity; now as they, who curiously investigate the nature and properties of light, contrive, by the interposition of some proper medium, to separate and refract it's rays, in order to discern the colours and qualities of each particular, and thence to form a more adequate notion of that glorious body: so when we apply ourselves to the contemplation of the Deity, our faculties being amazed and confounded with the insupportable radiance and effulgence of his united excellencies, we endeavour by the help of our imagination to separate and distinguish them, and to consider each by itself as having properties and producing effects, and bearing some analogy to the most noble and perfect of our human faculties and affections. Hence do we attempt to form the best conceptions, which our narrow capacities will admit, of the divine nature; to sort and distribute the incomprehensible perfections of the Deity into classes and systems; to denominate goodness the most amiable attribute; to conceive it as indued with a kind of supremacy, in the exercise whereof God is represented principally to delight, and to employ his wisdom and power, as it were, in ministerial subserviency to it. Hence too are the divine attributes distinguished into natural and moral, some referr'd to the intellect, and some to the will of the Deity; of the latter sort is the attribute of goodness; and the manifestations of it therefore are conceived, not as emanations necessarily and uniformly issuing from the ex-

cellence of the divine nature, but rather, as gracious dispensations appointed, determined, and conferr'd on mankind by the benignity of the divine will. Conformable to which notion we find various expressions of sacred Scripture, particularly (*Rev. iv. 11.*) we read, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure* (in the original it is *for or by thy will*) *they are, and were created.* And this consideration, that whatever good we possess is not only derived from God, but is purposely bestowed on us through his benevolence, obligeth all, who partake of the divine bounty, to acknowledge, love, reverence and adore their Benefactor, who hath made such abundant provision for the life, support, and comfort of his creatures.

That all our enjoyments flow thus from the inexhaustible fountain of goodness, the wisest and best of men have ever gratefully confessed; and though the wicked, by their practice, may seem to forget or disregard so venerable a truth, yet neither the sophistry of the subtlest, nor the effrontery of the boldest Champions of infidelity, hath been able to invalidate or disprove it.

Man is indebted to the Creator of the Universe for his very existence, and that is surely no mean benefit, which is the basis of all other, on which all the faculties of body and soul, all capacity of sensation and perception, do evidently depend. Again, the rank of man in the scale of created beings, which is little lower than the Angels, the dominion with which he is invested over the animal and vegetable world, the wonderful Structure of his bodily frame, the distinguished excellency of his rational soul, whereby he is enabled to maintain his rank, and to subjugate inferior agents to the purposes of his own will; these are privileges which he, who justly valueth, will suitably employ to the glory of their Author.

Nor are the riches of God's goodness more conspicuous, in the original production of man's nature, than in the continual preservation of his being. For who sees not that man from the birth is supported by a perpetual miracle? that, did not Providence with incessant watchfulness and care guard him from danger, and administer to his necessity, the interval between his first and latest breath would be not only short, but full of misery. Who sees not, that as the heavens declare the glory of God, so the earth and the fulness thereof, every thing that hath connection with it, or influence upon it, declares his goodness to the sons of men, and furnisheth

numberless evidences of his beneficence, in providing plentifully, variously, magnificently, all things pertaining to life and happiness.

But, besides these blessings, of which all are partakers, it pleased the Governor of the world to select out of mankind the posterity of Abraham, to magnify his power, and to display his peculiar love to them, by their miraculous deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, by feeding them with the bread of heaven forty years in the Wilderness, by giving them victory over their enemies, driving out the idolatrous nations from before them, and dividing their land for an inheritance unto Israel his people; and especially by making an express revelation to them of his divine will, by a continual superintendence of their affairs both civil and religious, and by seasonable interpositions of an extraordinary providence, disciplining them to a performance of their duty, and teaching them at once to promote his glory and their own welfare. He had not before dealt so with any nation. *To the Israelites pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. (Rom. ix. 4, 5.)*

Having thus noted some of the numberless instances, wherein the benevolence of the Deity is displayed toward mankind in general, and hath been accumulated on the Jewish nation in particular; suffice it for illustration of the first point, "That the general course of God's providence, in his government of the world, is the gracious effect of his benevolence to mankind."

And the more we admire God's goodness, the more reason shall we find to censure man's ingratitude, when we consider,

II. That God's providential goodness to man is not suitably requited.

And this we must with shame and confusion acknowledge to have been the case from the earliest age of the world to the present. Paradise itself was infested with wild grapes, when Adam transgressed the commandment of God. For, that sin is represented by them in the parable, the Prophet teaches at the 7th verse, *The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.* Observe here an explicit declaration, both what fruit God expected, and what he found.

found. He looked for the fruit of his choice vine, the object of his tenderest care and most diffusive bounty, that had been watered with the dew of heaven, and enriched with the fatness of the earth; and lo, instead of the delicious fruit of his pleasant plant, the harsh distasteful product of the wild vine! By *judgment* and *righteousness* is often denoted the whole of religion in the Writings of the Old Testament; but considered here with the terms to which they are opposed, we may conceive *judgment* as implying the duties of magistrates, or persons in power, to administer impartial justice, to defend the cause of the poor, to protect him from injury and oppression; and then, by *righteousness* we may understand the duties of private persons, to abstain from all acts of violence or injustice, whereby the neighbour's person, or property or reputation is invaded. On the whole, the expression implies, that the persons upbraided in it had acted directly contrary to their duty. And indeed, in the sequel of this Chapter, the Prophet produceth a long catalogue of national crimes, annexing dreadful woes, the effects of God's displeasure, against the offenders: and in the close denounceth that punishment, which David considered as the severest chastisement of a disobedient people, that they should be delivered a prey to the sword of their enemies, who, being God's instruments, are described as armed with power irresistible, *whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.* v. 28. A general corruption of manners seemed to require general correction, chastisement as extensive as the guilt. For where the blessings of Providence abounded, sin did also abound, and God's indulgent care of his peculiar people seemed strangely frustrated by their perverse abuse of his benefits. So that well might the Prophet, expostulating after the manner of men, affect the language of disappointment and surprise, *Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

And if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the peculiar favourites of Heaven, the disciples of Moses and the Prophets, acted in opposition to the will and commands of God, who had given them amazing testimonies of his love and power; what hopes remain, that other nations, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, who had reason only for their guide, and conscience for their monitor, should be exact in discharging their duty to the Lord
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and giver of life and breath, and all things? From the accounts given by Historians and Moralists of the politer and more civilized nations, we may judge of the rest, that the bulk of mankind were very negligent in the search of truth, and very defective in the practice of virtue; that, immersed in sensuality, they gave themselves up to vile affections, violating the order of nature, contradicting the most obvious conclusions of reason, and the law of God, legible in the nature of things, and written even in their own hearts, and that too not without some sanction, the observation of it evidently tending to the happiness of individuals, and the prosperity of communities; the breach of it naturally productive of misery and ruin to both. Add to this their absurd idolatry, stooping to the adoration of things without sense or life, creatures of their own workmanship and invention. Whereas the almighty maker of heaven and earth and sea and all things that are therein, left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. (*Acts* xiv. 15.) Wherefore they also are without excuse, for that, when the Deity was so plainly discovered to them, *they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful*: they glorified him not as was suitable to the excellency of the divine nature; nor did they with due thankfulness acknowledge him as the author of their being, and the giver of all the good they enjoyed. Just therefore is the Apostle's conclusion, (*Rom.* iii. 9.) in respect of both Jews and Gentiles, that *they are all under sin, and become guilty before God.*

In the natural world things proceed according to the original purpose and will of the Creator; they follow the order of his established law, which the creature cannot disobey: but in the moral world, liberty of choice and freedom of will give scope for irregularity of action, whereby sin is committed and guilt contracted. For,

III. Man is capable of discerning, and is obliged to acknowledge the benevolence and equity of God's dealings, as also the ingratitude and iniquity of his own conduct. *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.*

These words are addressed to the very party delinquent, the unworthy produce is submitted to the censure of the vineyard itself, that is, of the persons represented by it. This shews that God appeals

peals to them as competent judges, as able to discern the injustice of their own proceeding, of which the evidence was so plain and direct as to force conviction, and to infer self-condemnation. And that truth, which is implied in the form of the words, results also from the nature of sin to which they relate. Sin is the transgression of God's law; the Apostle saith (*Rom. iii. 20*) *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, hence is the knowledge of the law supposed antecedent to the transgression of it. The law being known, and its obligation manifest in regard to those who are dependent on the Legislator, as man is on God; the subject, comparing his actions with their rule, perceives how far they correspond: and the law having sanctions annexed, he perceives likewise how far he is intitled to its rewards, or obnoxious to its penalties. Sensible of the freedom of their will, conscious of a real power over their own actions, men rightly judge and secretly condemn their presumptuous deviations from the line of duty, are convinced of sin, and of ingratitude to their heavenly Father, whereby, having forfeited his favour, they justly fear his vengeance denounced, and certain to overtake those who persist in obstinate disobedience. Thus doth the judge of all the earth do right, not only what is absolutely right in itself, according to the measure of divine reason, and the decision of unerring wisdom; but also what is apparently right, according to human Ideas of truth and justice. Thus are rational agents dealt with, according to the principles of their own reason, in a rational manner: and hence, even the offenders themselves being judges, will God's goodness be magnified, and his justice vindicated.

Admonished by the occasion of the present solemnity, on which the representatives of the people of this land are assembled before God, to confess our sinfulness, and to implore his mercy, let us now consider with what propriety the Prophet's exhortation may be applied to ourselves. For is God (*Rom. iii. 29.*) *the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also. We too are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* We have been favoured with his bounty, and honoured with his commands, and are proportionally obliged to the duties of gratitude and obedience.

The relations of former times, and experience of the present, declare how abundantly God hath been gracious to our land, inasmuch, that his kindness to us may seem to equal his favour to the Israelites, even under the dispensation of an especial providence.

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For how inestimable are the natural advantages we enjoy, in the temperature of climate, fertility of soil, the commodiousness of our situation for the purposes of extensive commerce, and for security from violence of foreign enemies, the waters being a wall unto us on the right hand and on the left, separating our fortunate island from those oppressions, devastations, and slaughter, under which the neighbouring nations groan? How greatly is our enjoyment of these natural blessings heightened and improved by the excellent constitution of our civil government, calculated for the happiness, and adapted to the condition of a free people? With what gratitude should we reflect on that auspicious time, when God caused the glorious light of the Gospel to shine upon this people that sat in darkness, until the glad tidings of salvation reclaimed them, from the rudeness of Barbarism and heathenish Idolatry, to the acknowledgment of the truth, and the worship of himself, *calling them his people, which were not his people, and her beloved, which was not beloved?* (Rom. ix. 25.) Then was that Covenant of Grace offered to our acceptance, for rejecting of which the Jewish national church and polity were dissolved, and the Gentiles adopted in their room; and God was pleased to transfer his peculiar favour and protection to the Christian name.

Seeing then that the bounties of heaven have been so liberal and important to us, both in the blessings of nature and grace, that under the care of Providence our religion hath been preserved, or reformed, from the corruptions which dishonour Christianity as professed in other nations; that our civil liberties and constitution are continued to us unimpaired by length of time or violence of men; seeing that on the dispersion of the tribes of Israel, the Christian Church hath succeeded to the place of God's vineyard; as members thereof, and as the most pure and reformed part of it, may we not conceive ourselves interested in the Prophet's Expostulation, *What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?*

But, while we adore the goodness of God, it behoves us to retain an awful sense of his justice. Can we rely on the continuance of his bounty towards us, or hope to inherit the great and precious promises of the Gospel covenant, if we are careless to please him, and to perform the conditions required of us? God is not mocked, his observation no art can elude, his power no creature can resist. He, that bestoweth blessings on a nation, may be provoked

voked to withhold them, to inflict national calamity. *A fruitful land maketh be barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* (Psal. cvii. 34.) He can convert all the elements of nature into instruments of his vengeance, as he did against the Egyptians. *They that go down to the Sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep,* (Psal. cvii. 23, 24.) that the winds and storms fulfil his word, in punishing the disobedience, in correcting the misplaced confidence, of sinful men. He, that doth what he pleaseth both in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, hath surely the events of war in his hand, wherein amazing testimonies have been recorded of providential interposition; I mean not by raining down fire from heaven to consume the enemy, but when the fate of kingdoms hath been decided by the intervention of such unheeded accidents, as seemed to derive all their importance from the seasonableness of their occurrence, serving to deliver the people that were in adversity, and to bring down the high looks of the proud. Wherefore *Abab's* reply to the haughty message of *Benbadad*, (1 Kings, xxi. 11.) contains an admonition of general use, *Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off.* For, as Solomon teacheth us, (Prov, xxi. 30, 31.) *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. The horse is prepared against the day of battle; but safety, or victory, is of the Lord.*

We acknowledge with all thankfulness the goodness of God to us, in blessing our arms with a wonderful series of successes: yet war, in its most prosperous state, is afflictive. We cannot reflect, without the deepest concern, on the multitude of the precious lives of our brave and dear countrymen, which have been expended, *and are as water spilled on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again.* (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) How did our fond hopes of peace lately vanish as the morning dew! How strangely were they reversed by the sudden appearance of new enemies! who, even in opposition to their own interests, renounced our friendship, and yet seemed unable to pretend a reasonable cause, that they were so maliciously set against us.

When our enemies are thus multiplied, it is surely our wisdom to retain, or recover, the friendship of God; of him who is mighty to save; to engage his alliance, which is our best security, as well from fear, as from distress. And for this pious and important end

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we are now assembled by the King's command, humbly to confess, and heartily to bewail our manifold sins, whereby we may have justly provoked God's wrath; to express our unfeigned sorrow for them, and, through the merits of our Saviour and Redeemer, to intreat for pardon and forgiveness; to renew our vows of future obedience to God's law, and to implore the grace and assistance of his holy spirit, that we may be enabled to persevere in our duty to our lives end. These are means of reconciliation prescribed by the gracious covenant of the Gospel of Christ, on the use of which the sinner's hope of pardon must depend.

We have referred the justice of our cause to the Lord of Hosts, and we trust, notwithstanding the suggestion of our enemies, that our public faith remains inviolate, that our stipulated engagements have been punctually fulfilled with a sacred regard to justice, and that our whole national conduct towards our enemies, as well as friends, hath been dictated by a spirit of honour, clemency, and generosity peculiarly our own. But however just our cause, it behoves us to consider, whether it is not the cause of a people, whose wickedness the divine justice may be concerned to punish, or the divine mercy may think fit to chastise in the event? For God hath an undoubted right to judge not only of the merits of the cause, but of the demerits of the persons concerned in it; and may take occasion to punish our offences against himself even by the sword of an injurious adversary. Are violations of public faith the only species of national sins? doubtless, the number and weight of them is much increased from the corruption of national manners; from our neglect or transgression of religious and moral duties, from our intemperate abuse of the good things, wherewith Providence hath filled our land, to the purposes of Luxury, Pride, or Avarice; from the acts of injustice to our neighbour by cruelty, oppression, violence, or fraud; from our manifold impieties towards God, whereby his name is blasphemed, his sabbaths profaned, his word and commandment despised, his patience abused, as if his vengeance were also defied. And are these the fruits wherewith we requite God's goodness to us? did not the like sins call for that dreadful sentence which immediately follows the text? *And now, go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste.* —

Now, that national guilt deserves national punishment, we cannot deny; that our sins give us just occasion to fear the wrath of God, we are here assembled purposely to confess, and to deprecate the punishment we dread. National retributions are dispensed in this world, though the final and unalterable condition of individuals will commence in a future life. There is therefore a double interest to be regarded, national and personal, temporal and eternal: and yet both are promoted by the same care. For the virtue of individuals naturally tendeth to the prosperity of the community, and their vices to its ruin and dissolution. And thus, in the ordinary course of Providence, the virtue of particulars is here also encouraged and rewarded by their sharing those comforts which result from the flourishing condition of their nation; as also the sinful are punished in some degree by suffering under the common calamity in which, through their vices, the public is involved. Hence personal sins become objects of national concern, and offences against God are so far crimes against the state, as they naturally tend to weaken and subvert it, and provoke God to abandon its protection, or hasten its fall. Little will it avail us curiously to inquire, whether our, or our enemies, sins are more heinous; we are conscious of our own demerit; we labour with the difficulties of a protracted war, which heaven permits, probably, for the chastisement both of us and them. Let the chastisement we have already born teach us not to offend any more; then may we hope, that God, who hath often signally delivered our church and nation from imminent peril and distress, will be intreated for our land, and will yet deliver us.

To this end, having prayed for God's blessing, let us not remit our own endeavours to deserve it: let our supplications be seconded with our care and zeal for the reformation of others as well as of ourselves. And seeing that neither the grave admonitions of our spiritual Pastors, nor the unwearied diligence of the civil magistrate, God's ministers attending continually on this very thing, nor the wholesome severities of the law, are found sufficient to restrain the overflowings of ungodliness; let every one contribute his proper aid, and promote both his own and the publick good, by a method, practicable by all, offensive to none, by becoming himself a pattern of good works. For why may not examples of virtue, if equally numerous, have equal influence, with examples of vice? Modesty and chastity, temperance and sobriety, prudence and
oeconomy,

oeconomy, justice and probity, charity and piety, enoble the actions and characters of persons of the meanest rank, and add an inexpressible grace and lustre to those of the highest. Do we affect to imitate the vices and follies of our superiors in opposition to the remonstrances of our own reason and the convictions of conscience; and shall we not imitate their virtues, which nature and reason and conscience conspire to approve, and recommend to our practice? But besides the bright example of personal virtue and piety, in itself exceedingly amiable and attractive; wealth, and station, and power are usually attended with a numerous retinue of obsequious dependents, who are industrious to fashion their own manners according to the model they profess most to admire; hence the influence of good example becomes as extensive as weighty, and being prudently directed to its best use may greatly reform the bulk of the people: and though hereby all should not become so good as we wish, doubtless numbers would become much better than they are. Open and scandalous vice and profaneness would at least be discouraged, would not hope to elude, or dare to defy the magistrate's power and the law's authority; and vice in general, stigmatised with that reproach and infamy which it justly deserves, would soon lose its empire, and be stripped of its allurements, the enchantment would be dissolved, its strength enervated, its attractions cease. In short, example is a kind of universal argument, suited to all degrees of understanding, and serves in the stead of a thousand reasons to such whose discernment or disposition will admit no better. All superiors therefore may justly avail themselves of this influence, and be eminently serviceable to their country in applying it to the promotion of virtue and piety, to the preservation of order, decency, and peace, among all the members of the civil community, to the restoring that integrity of life and bravery of spirit, for which Britons have been admired and revered, to the honour of our holy religion, to the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. Whoever doeth this with prudence and diligence, gives a noble evidence of his charity, patriotism, loyalty, and piety.

It was King David's method of recommending himself and his people to God's favour, to regulate his own practice by a religious attention to the divine command, and to encourage and reward a like disposition in his subjects: *I will walk, saith he, in my house with a perfect heart—I will not know a wicked person—Whoso*
leadeth

leadeth a godly life he shall be my servant. And, aptly correspondent to holy David's resolution, is that auspicious declaration of our most religious and gracious Sovereign, wherein we are assured of his determined purpose, that he will distinguish by marks of his royal favour or displeasure, between the virtuous and the vicious, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not: thus no less wisely than piously providing, that his throne should be established in righteousness, and that the blessing of God should be upon his people.

But Piety and Probity contribute to the Prosperity of a nation not only in respect of its civil concerns, but also of its military operations; for besides conciliating God's favour in support of a righteous cause, there is observed a natural connection between goodness of heart and greatness of mind. He that conscious of his own integrity can safely trust in God's mercy hath little cause to fear either danger or death: his heart is established and will not shrink, when his arm is employed in the service of his King, in the defence of his Country, his liberty and religion. True valour is rarely found in individuals without true goodness. Honour and shame are temporary incentives to bold and rash actions, and sometimes serve on sudden occasions in the room of a better principle; but cool, sedate, intrepid courage disdains to consort with a corrupt heart, whose conscience upbraids it with enormous vice and impiety, and with the dreadful condition of obstinate impenitence. *The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a Lion.* (Prov. xxviii. 1.)

And as the principles of religion inspire the soul with Christian fortitude to encounter the dangers of Warfare, so doth the practice of virtue fit and enable the body to endure its hardships. He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, and he that is temperate in all things, doth use the most approved means of preserving health, strength, vigor of mind and body, to acquit himself, on every call of duty, as becomes a Christian, a Protestant, and a Briton.

We have this day been employ'd in a most important and necessary duty of religion, the solemn confession of our sins to God, and in lamenting our unfruitfulness under the means of Grace, so long, and so abundantly, afforded to us; we have professed unfeigned repentance, and renew'd our vows of future obedience—
with

with what sincerity and contrition these duties have been performed is known only to him, to whom all hearts are open.

If our sacrifice hath been such as by the terms of the Christian covenant is required, we may securely rely on God's promise that we shall be accepted; that they, whose consciences by sin are accused, by his merciful pardon shall be absolved; that He will be reconciled, and succour us with his defence in time of danger, and with his Grace in time of temptation; that the Lord of hosts will be with us, and the God of Jacob be our refuge; that He will support our Sovereign in the maintenance of his just rights, will inspire his counsels with wisdom, and prosper his arms with success; that in his good time He will restore to us the blessings of peace in this life, and finally bring us to everlasting happiness in the life to come. Which God grant through the merits of Christ Jesus our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, glory, power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

T H E E N D.

St. Margaret's Westminster

with which I have been
familiarly acquainted since
my birth. I have seen
many of the noblest
spirits of the age
gathered round the
altar of St. Margaret's
and I have seen the
light of heaven
shining upon the
faces of the
children of the
poor. I have seen
the tears of the
suffering and the
joy of the redeemed
and I have seen
the love of God
manifested in
the lives of his
people. I have seen
the power of the
Holy Spirit
working in the
souls of men
and I have seen
the glory of the
Kingdom of God
manifested in the
lives of his
people.

